

THE ACADEMY.  
April 17, 1909

THE "OLD FIRM" IN PUBLISHING

# THE ACADEMY

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED LITERATURE AND THE ENGLISH REVIEW

Edited by LORD ALFRED BRUCE DOUGLAS

No. 1928

APRIL 17, 1909

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## "SCORPIO." By J. A. CHALONER

"He prides himself on the fact that he is a hard and terrible hitter." Indeed, he assures us that he has come to the conclusion that you can put a wicked man "to sleep" with a sonnet pretty much the same way that a prize-fighter puts his opponent to sleep with a finished blow. And not only does Mr. Chaloner believe in what we may term the sonnetorial fist, but he believes also in whips and scorpions, for the cover of his book is decorated with an angry-looking seven-thonged scourge, and he dubs the whole effort "Scorpio." So that when we look to the fair page itself we know what to expect. Nor are we disappointed. Mr. Chaloner goes to the opera. Being a good poet, he immediately writes a sonnet about it, the which, however, he calls "The Devil's Horseshoe." We reproduce it for the benefit of all whom it may concern:—

'A second sight for a philosopher—  
Rich as Golconda's mine in lessons rare—  
That gem-bediz'd "horse-shoe" at th' Opera,  
Replete with costly hats and matrons fair!  
His votaries doth Mammon there array,  
His Amazonian Phalanx dread to face!'

To Mammon there do they their homage pay :  
Spaniel'd with jewels, satins, silks and lace,  
Crones whose old bosoms in their corsets creak ;  
Heldomse whose slightest glance would fright a horse ;  
Ghouls—when they speak one hears the grave-mole squeak—  
Their escorts *parvenus* of feature coarse.

A rich array of Luxury and Vice !

But, spite of them, the music's very nice."  
"Here you have whips, scorpions, and a knock-out blow with a vengeance. The sonnet as a whole is not one which we can approve from a technical or a sentimental point of view, but it has points. Henley might have plumed himself on that line about the creaking corsets, and the last line, a *tout de force*, in its way reminds us of the withering ironies of Byron. It is only fair to Mr. Chaloner to add that not all his sonnets are concerned with back-flaying. Some of them show the tenderer emotions proper to a poet. We like him best, however, in his character as metrical bruiser. . . . His book is well worth possessing."—*The Academy*, August 8th, 1908.

Figuratively speaking, we (Palmetto Press) might add that Mr. Chaloner steps forward as the champion of Shakespeare's memory, and lands, with the force of a John L. Sullivan, upon the point of the jaw of Mr. G. B. SHAW, owing to the latter's impudent comments upon Shakespeare.

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## LIFE AND LETTERS

By the death of Mr. Algernon Charles Swinburne we lose the last of our great poets, or, as Mr. George Meredith very properly puts it, "the greatest of our lyrical poets." Not only so, but we lose a critic of fine and fierce parts, a man of a high heart and a noble view of letters and the literary function. No poet has worn the purple of his office with greater dignity and reasonableness than Mr. Swinburne. He let them rave and kept with the Muses. Notoriety and what is called legitimate advertisement never appealed to him. He had the great man's subconscious scorn of littleness, pettiness and vulgarity. It mattered nothing to him who praised him or who blamed him, and though he was a swashbuckler in his way, nowhere do you find him fighting for Swinburne. It is befitting that a poet who carried his greatness with such extraordinary and child-like modesty should somehow have contrived to save us the usual squabble about Westminster Abbey. In a sense Westminster Abbey would have been his natural and proper place of sepulchre. But he was buried on Thursday in the Isle of Wight; so that we were spared a considerable deal of illustrated journalism as well. It is curious that Tennyson should come out of the Isle of Wight to Westminster Abbey, and that Swinburne should come out of London to the Isle of Wight. It is singular, also, that the announcements of his death were, without exception, tailed off with the inevitable intelligence that the death of Mr. Swinburne "came as a terrible shock to his life-long friend, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton." We have still to read Mr. Clement Shorter on the subject.

After grave deliberation Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie send us the following letter:

5 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden,  
London, W.C.  
April 8th, 1909.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY,  
63 Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

SIR.—In your edition of April 3rd appears the following editorial comment:

If the most hopeless playwright in the world sent Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie the most hopeless play that was ever written, together with a cheque for fifty guineas and a request that the play be submitted to every manager in London, Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie would not send back the cheque, and there would be no dishonour or discredit about the transaction.

This is seriously untrue. We undertake arrangements for only such work as we can, with a reasonable amount of confidence, commend to publishers or dramatic managers, and never, so far, have found it advisable to accept a retaining fee, either from dramatic or literary authors. At present we see no reason to alter this policy, and if a "most hopeless play," or, indeed, any play or book not considered worthy of a manager's or publisher's immediate attention, were sent to us, together with a cheque for fifty guineas—or for ten times that amount—both cheque and play would be returned at once. Furthermore, we should consider it decidedly discreditable to do otherwise, for the money would be taken under false pretences. We cannot place an undesirable work as well as the author himself can. Such London managers as we have dealt with are apparently genuinely glad to get plays from us, realising that only such plays are offered as seem to careful readers to be really worthy of consideration. In consequence, not only do plays offered by us get immediate attention, but we have a number of applications from responsible managers for plays to suit their requirements. In the last four weeks, four plays—all either three or four acts—offered by us in the last six weeks have been accepted for either London or New York production; the advance payments to the authors have been made on three of them; and the advance payment on the fourth is due in two weeks. Our work is paid for only by commission on sums actually collected for the author.

These statements are so precisely contrary to your editorial observations that we trust you will think it fair to withdraw both your hypothesis, so far as its application to our firm is concerned, and the comment you have built upon it.

Yours very truly,

CURTIS BROWN AND MASSIE.

We rejoice to hear that Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie do not accept fees—whatever Mr. Archer may do; though, on the other hand, we are sorry that they are anxious to insist upon a wrong view of the Dramatic Agent's business. They say that they would not accept a cheque for submitting a hopeless play to actors and managers; and they also say that if they accepted such a cheque they would be obtaining money by false pretences. We have always understood that it was the business of a literary or dramatic agent to take the instruction and fees of any client who happens to turn up. But Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie are of a different opinion, and it seems that they never take fees and that they would not handle a hopeless play at any price whatever. Two questions naturally arise out of these admirable circumstances: Are we to understand that Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie live out of a percentage on "sums actually collected for the author"; and, secondly, if they do live on this percentage, is it not a little singular that we should find them inserting in a journal like the *Author* an advertisement which is obviously addressed to amateurs? We have no desire in the world to traverse Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie's statements, and still less do we desire to impute to them discreditable or improper methods of business. At the same time, it seems to us difficult to reconcile the letter we now print with the advertisement which they were lately publishing from month to month in the official journal of the Authors' Society. Are we to understand also that Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie take no share of the fees charged by Mr. Archer for reading, advising, doctoring, tinkering-up and otherwise

making presentable the unrepresentable and the unacceptable and the hopeless?

We note further and with satisfaction that Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie have quite lately placed "in London or New York" four plays for their clients, and that in three instances the payment in advance has been received. Of course, if Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie are desirous of introducing America into the question, we are afraid that we shall be unable to cope with them. America is a vasty continent, and we are happy to think that we are more or less unacquainted with the literary and dramatic agency business as it is conducted in America. But it seems to us that, having skilfully and no doubt profitably disposed of four plays "in London or New York," Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie might, without any very extraordinary mental effort, have contrived to be a little more definite on the point. That is to say, it would be easy for them to inform us how many of these four plays have been disposed of in England, which, when all is said and done, is the important country. It would also have been interesting to hear what sums are being paid in advance, and it would have been more interesting still to know if any of these plays have been doctored by Mr. Archer, and if any of them is the work of the kind of amateur to whom Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie's late advertisement was addressed. Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie are anxious that we should "withdraw." THE ACADEMY is not in the habit of withdrawing, particularly where there is nothing to withdraw. Our point is not that Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie are conducting a discreditable or dubious business, and we should not consider that they were conducting a dubious or discreditable business even if they were accepting fees and dealing with hopeless amateurs.

What we maintain is that the advertisement which, jointly with Mr. Archer, they have caused to be inserted in the *Author* is an advertisement which might readily be misinterpreted by amateur authors, and which is, consequently, an undesirable advertisement from the point of view of authorship. Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie assure us in their letter that they will not handle hopeless work. Is it not a pity that they omitted to mention this fact in their advertisement in the *Author*? There is not a single word in this advertisement which will lead amateurs of any sort or kind to a knowledge of the great truth that when Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie receive a hopeless play they return the manuscript and the fees. On the contrary, the advertisement is capable of being read as a direct invitation to persons who have failed hopelessly, to have another try and to employ Mr. Archer as a sort of guide, philosopher and friend, at two guineas a time, to render their bad plays good enough for the handling of Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie. We have great pleasure in giving Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie's letter the publicity which we gave to their advertisement and to Mr. Archer's letter. We do not intend anything that we have said to be taken as a reflection on Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie's good faith or good intentions towards their clients. But we reiterate that their advertisement was an advertisement which might induce misconception in the mind of the inexperienced, and we are glad to see that they have had the good sense to withdraw it. We think that if the words "Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie do not accept fees and cannot in any circumstance submit to managers or actors work which does

not possess sufficient merit to render acceptance possible," the advertisement would be an entirely proper one so far as Messrs. Curtis Brown and Massie are concerned. Whether even with this addition it would tend to lend lustre to the name of Mr. William Archer is another question.

We are flattered to observe in the *Spectator* for April 10th an article entitled "In the Time of the Lilies." The article commences as follows:

One of the commonest flowers in any herbaceous border is the beautiful, old-fashioned Madonna lily. There are many statelier and more gorgeous blossoms of the lily kind, but none sweeter, and then, too, the "Mary Lily," as it is called in the North of England, has the added charm of association, for no picture of the Annunciation is complete unless a branch of these pure white blossoms stands up between Mary and the angel.

By a singular coincidence there appeared in THE ACADEMY of February 13th an article entitled "In the Time of the Lilies," and this article also began: "One of the commonest flowers in any herbaceous border is the beautiful old-fashioned Madonna lily, etc., etc." Not to put too fine a point on it, the *Spectator* of April 10th has reprinted holus-bolus and without a word of acknowledgment an article which appeared in THE ACADEMY of February 13th. We are aware that the editor of the *Spectator*, Mr. St. Loe Strachey, affects not to read THE ACADEMY. The fact that when he fails to read THE ACADEMY he is not doing his best by the *Spectator* and the readers of the *Spectator* need not concern us. We, for our part, read the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review* and the *Athenaeum* and even the *Outlook*. If Mr. St. Loe Strachey would devote a little of the time which he consecrates to the preparation of extraordinary speeches about the Press to a perusal of his contemporaries and co-partners in the literary field, he would at least save himself such pathetic andunjournalistical accidents as the one to which we hereby call attention. Furthermore, he would find it an excellent tonic for his high and mighty—if a trifle jumpy—mind.

Of course, it is open for Mr. St. Loe Strachey, who is nothing if not our only authority on the higher journalism, to retort after the manner of Mr. C. Arthur Pearson's editor that it is not the function of an editor to read his contemporaries; and that an editor is not responsible for the slips and blunders of the mewling and puking underlings who do the real work of newspaper editing. The editor of the *Spectator*, unlike Mr. C. Arthur Pearson's editor, is so busy lunching with the German Minister and arranging the terms of the Budget proposals with Mr. Lloyd George that he cannot possibly be expected to have the smallest interest in what the editor of THE ACADEMY or the editor of the *Saturday Review* may happen to be saying. On the other hand, Mr. St. Loe Strachey, again unlike Mr. C. Arthur Pearson's editor, would appear to maintain for his own private behoof a more or less efficient editorial intelligence department. That is to say, he appears to have told off some subordinate or other to read THE ACADEMY for him, and to report to him promptly any slip that THE ACADEMY might make when the *Spectator* is under discussion. It is this admirable service, no doubt, which enabled him to assure us so pompously the other day that he had been "informed" that such and such an issue of THE ACADEMY contained such and such a misstatement with regard to the *Spectator*. We trust that the aforesaid

intelligence department will make haste to inform their inflated chief—we hope chief is a good enough term—about this terrible affair as to the lilies. We are all acquainted with the beautiful old-fashioned Madonna lily, but the beautiful old-fashioned abdominal editor in a cocked hat amuses us.

The vagaries of the cheaper press continue to stagger one. The *Daily Mirror*, for example, has reduced its readers to such a state of brainlessness that it is now compelled to provide them with a daily table of subjects for conversation at dinner. We append an example:

#### TO-DAY'S DINNER-TABLE TOPICS.

##### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

April weddings. The marriage of Lord Dalmeny, Lord Rosebery's eldest son, and Miss Dorothy Grosvenor to-day.

Which is the best month to get married in? Is May unlucky? Have you any superstitions about marriage? Do you prefer quiet or noisy weddings? The disadvantage of being married "quietly" is that you are apt to miss all the presents—the silver inkstands, the silver toast-racks, the complete editions of Tennyson's works; and perhaps also the diamond necklaces, the cheques, and the household furniture. If you do not ask everybody to the wedding, everybody is not obliged to give you a present.

In politics to-day there is the Independent Labour Party crisis and the question of Socialism, or different views of it, involved.

Abroad, the crisis at Constantinople. The eternal problem and danger of the Near East.

##### GENERAL, LITERARY, THEATRICAL.

It is said that Bank Holiday crowds this Easter have been better behaved and given less trouble than ever before. Can it be that the loud-voiced Bank Holiday bounder, who leaves scraps of paper and broken bottles about, is at last dying out? Did you see anything of him last Monday? And so on and so forth.

Surely idiocy is getting the upper hand amongst us. Meanwhile the *New Age* finds it necessary to print articles about "mental fitness" (we thought it would come to that) and Mr. T. P. O'Connor's bright educational organ, *T. P.'s Weekly*, is running a series of articles on "Mental Tillage." The articles, need one say, are by a Mr. MacPhairson. We suppose that mental tillage has something to do with putting manure in one's boots.

In the current number of *Vanity Fair* Mr. Frank Harris calls attention to what, in the absence of explanation, looks like an exceedingly flagrant case of plagiarism. It seems that Mr. Harris has been reading a novel by Mr. Jack London, and that this novel contains an entire article by Mr. Harris, which Mr. London has "lifted" and appropriated without so much as "By your leave." What is more, the article in question happens to embody a very striking and in a way sensational idea, and Mr. London is no doubt getting considerable kudos out of it. There is a story about a gentleman who, on being caught in most compromising circumstances by another gentleman with murder in his eye, exclaimed, "My dear sir, don't shoot, everything can be explained." We are inclined to think that in this instance Mr. Jack London will want all his wits to account creditably for what has taken place. The present paragraph must not be taken as an indication that we approve particularly of either Mr. Harris or *Vanity Fair*. But there is no reason why either of them should be robbed in the daylight.

#### BONCHURCH, APRIL 15, 1909

THE cherry whitens in the April air,  
Young Spring has spilt her magic on the wold,  
The woodlands ring with rapture as of old,  
And England lies new-washen, green and fair;  
Yet is she heavy with a secret care,  
For Death the ever-sharp and ever-bold  
Hath taken our Tongue of Honey, our Throat of  
Gold;

And we have digged a pit, and left him there.

So must he sleep, though it be high broad noon  
Or Venus shimmer in the darkling firs:  
The music and the roses are forgot;  
Even the great round marigold of a moon,  
That is for lovers and for harvesters,  
And all the sighing seas, may move him not.

T. W. H. C.

#### ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

"VICISTI GALILÆE!" That was the quotation, one supposes, which came most frequently to men's lips when they heard that Swinburne was dead. To most of us he had stood for the Hellenic element in a world that has long since abandoned Hellas and her ideals; he was a Victorian in nothing but the external detail of his *floruit*. In a sense, of course, his defeat came long before his death. With the great body of Victorian poetry he had little in common, and he had even less in common with the world of everyday thought. When Swinburne began to write, the "pale Galilæan" had already won the day: it was the Tennysons and the Brownings whose message came straight to men's hearts. For the Hellenic passion of self-abandonment there was no place.

For, after all, it was this self-abandonment and this passion that formed the side of Hellenism which Swinburne chiefly loved and of which he was the chief singer. To "see life steadily and see it whole" formed no part of his gospel, and the "sweetness and light" of Sophocles were as far removed from his vision as the abnegations of St. Paul. He was, if you will, a Greek of the Greeks, but he was a Greek of the Ionian period: his poetry is akin, not to Sophocles and Æschylus, not even to Pindar, but to Sappho, Alceæus, and, in a later day, to the poets of the Anthology and to Theocritus. One can find in him little of that restraint, that clarity of outline, and fineness of atmosphere that characterised Greek work of the Periclean period. You seek in vain anything like the "Œdipus Tyrannus" and the "Antigone"—or even like the "Medea" and the "Hippolytus." That impersonal outlook which most of us think of as peculiarly Greek was wholly alien from his temperament. He was Greek, in fact, in virtue of two qualities: his love of beauty and his love of freedom. Two qualities, it is true, of high importance, but by no means the whole of Hellenism. His work, indeed, in many ways comes nearer to the Renascence than to

Hellas: it has all the passionate enthusiasm, the absence of restraint that characterised the work of the Italians. It is a poetry whose whole object is the worship of beauty, and a poetry which finds that beauty more in "human things" than in the world of Nature. It is a poetry of some virtues and of many faults; but, setting aside the question of its own worthiness, it is a poetry which could not make any strong appeal to the public of yesterday and to-day. Two causes, one may say, predestined it to value. It came at a time when Christian ethics, as opposed to Christian theory, were at their strongest. Some day, possibly, men may return to the Hellenic standpoint, or it may be the Gothic spirit will come to its own. In either case Mr. Swinburne's poetry might well make a far wider appeal. But for the nonce, happily, we are under the influence of St. Paul: the "world and the flesh" are classed with "the devil." In us—that is, in our flesh—"dwelleth no good thing." And the one thing essential to Mr. Swinburne's art is a profound—nay, a devout—belief, not in the human soul, but in the human body. The "Poems and Ballads" had no message of beauty in man's heart, no vision of the glory of self-sacrifice and devotion, of friendship and comradeship—nothing but this intense and passionate pursuit of sensuous beauty. The chorus of disapprobation which it met proved definitely that this side of Hellenism—and perhaps, after all, it is the most prominent side—could, in the nature of things, find no place in modern life. "Wilt thou yet take all," he sings:

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean; but these thou shalt not take,  
The laurel, the palms, and the paean; the breasts of the nymphs  
in the brake.

But the cry is a cry of despair: of one who finds none to answer him. Men would have none of these "secret ways of love" of his, any more than they would endure his devotion to externals in beauty. He made his appeal to a few—to those Hellenists who set this side of their divinity over all others; above all, to those who, knowing little of Greece, were prepared to take their Paganism at second-hand. To the most part of men he was "a voice crying in the wilderness," and his words, they said, were not good to listen to. The glory and rapture of the world's youth could not be brought back by mere desire: for good or ill men had flung away that self-abandonment; and Swinburne was speaking to hearers whose lips had "grown sad with kissing Christ."

And it well may be that another cause, as potent if more subtle, was working against this revival of Hellenism. His poetry, great as it often is, has nearly always an element of unreality. He lived, if you like, in an unreal world, a place of "lovely shadows and beautiful dreams." He had taken beauty as his province, and he had no more than other men's conceptions of the beautiful. He deals, in fact, with the avowedly poetic subjects: Life, Love, Death—the trinity of every minor poet and most great ones. He fails, as many poets failed—as Keats and Rossetti failed—to see the beautiful in everyday things. That power of seeking out new hiding-places of Romance—which Wordsworth and Browning had, which Whitman had, which to-day is the possession of none save Mr. Kipling—that power Mr. Swinburne had not. In the unsubstantial dreamworld of the poets he could find eternal beauty—he could not see that "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, that is all." And so one feels that, even in a world predisposed to the pursuit of the purely beautiful, even in a world which had not taken St. Paul as its precentor, Mr. Swinburne's poetry, with an admittedly wider appeal, would yet have been transient in its influence. Its pursuit of Beauty was unacceptable,

through the influence of a creed; it could never have been successful because it proceeded on unsound principles.

He was fighting, then, in a cause pre-doomed to failure; and his poetry bears many of the traces of such work. There is a disposition to exaggerate his theory, which in many cases brought Mr. Swinburne very close to other writers. The gap which separates "Faustine" and "Dorian Gray" is no very large one, and, allowing for difference of temperament, "Anactoria" and "Dolores" might well have come from Théophile Gautier. The pursuit of human beauty which is healthy in Sappho and in a great part of the Anthology has become morbid in "Poems and Ballads." Setting aside "Atalanta in Calydon"—and that is an early work—Mr. Swinburne's gospel is a gospel of unnatural warmth, of unnatural lights and shades. It is the difference between clear dawn and a lurid sunset. He would follow beauty "like a sinking star"—beyond the utmost bounds of human thought or of normal emotion: through "secrets and sorrows unbelieved of us." He would "follow beauty," but it is:

That thing transform'd which was the Cytherean,  
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine  
Long since.

This new Hellenism has little in common with "the first fine careless rapture" which produced Sappho: it is more akin to the Renaissance, but it is a renaissance fallen on evil days. For the clear skies and bright light of the Italians and of the Elizabethan Romantics it gives us the "fervid, languid glories" of heavier suns in mightier skies—"dreams, desires and sombre songs and sweet." It is a poetry which could not live nowadays. "Noble and nude and antique" it may be, but one knows certainly that its father is not "a god and a Greek." Mr. Swinburne is following, not Cytherea nor Persephone, nor Apollo, but "a ghost, a bitter and luxurious god."

With it all there is, and especially in the later work, a definite consciousness of failure and a resultant pessimism. Be it Christian ethics that have wrought the mischief or no, the fact remains clear that this pursuit of beauty is a "creed outworn." "Itylus" shows that as plainly as does "Dolores," or that "Ave atque Vale" which is possibly Mr. Swinburne's greatest work. "Rose or rue or laurel," these are the gifts Mr. Swinburne brought to Baudelaire, and they are the flowers ourselves must strew to-day. "Thelème is afar as the water" and no man may come to it. The world, perhaps, was not worthy, not sure enough for this ancient creed; at any rate, the fact of failure stands out clear, clear even to the poet himself. "Atalanta in Calydon"—the one piece of work which came nearest to the Greek—is the one piece of work which makes an appeal to the modern soul. That apart, all is bitterness, bitterness of defeat and hope unfulfilled:

The years are hungry,  
They wail all their days;  
The gods wax angry,  
And weary of praise,  
And who shall bridle their lips, and who shall straighten  
their ways.

The Master "that was thrall to Love" is "become thrall to Death."

And, with it all, Mr. Swinburne yet gave us much that was great poetry. His revolt against the Victorians was not wholly in vain. He produced "Atalanta in Calydon," and he produced "Hertlia." It was well, in an age when men had forgotten Greece, that Greece should call to them, even though they could not listen to her voice, even though the message

was no true one. It was well that, for this last time, men should know something of a creed they had rejected, even though that creed came to them in a false setting. It was well Mr. Swinburne wrote, if only that his devotion to beauty produced felicities of phrase and of music, whose like no other poet—not even Shelley—has given us. The old order had passed and, in this age at least, might not return; but it had left an imperishable heritage. And, for Mr. Swinburne himself, one likes to think of him as one sent "out of due season" with a message the world would not hear—because it must not. The "Song of the Sirens" was lovely, though it brought destruction. His task was impossible, and his path a thorny one, so one likes to think of him now as apart from praise or recrimination, where "beyond these voices there is peace." It is the tribute himself paid to another of his own camp:

Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done;  
There lies not any troublous thing before,  
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,  
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,  
All waters as the shore.

Evil days and evil tongues, "nothing can touch him further." *Requiescat.*

### SWINBURNE'S PROSE

THE lamentable and totally unexpected death of almost the last of England's great poets has moved us with a sorrow, the depth of which, perhaps, we had hardly anticipated. Mr. Swinburne was so familiar a figure that it was possible to forget that in him we still possessed a man whose words burned in the ears of the prophets of nearly half a century ago. It may not be unprofitable at this time when the echoes of his verse ring through the bereaved land to glance at another side of his work—the prose writings.

Compared with the company of those to whom his name is familiar through his poems, the number of persons acquainted with his prose productions is disproportionate; and this is not difficult to understand, since with the exception of a single novel published in 1905 ("Love's Cross-Currents"), the prose lies in the somewhat recondite domain of literary criticism.

The reply of Dr. Samuel Johnson to Boswell when the subject of literary taste was being argued is peculiarly pertinent to our present theme. "One loves a neat style," said the Doctor, "another loves a style of more splendour. In like manner, one loves a plain coat, another loves a laced coat, but neither will deny that each is good in its kind." There can be no law of the Medes and Persians as to this mysterious quality of style in literature. Swift, Addison, Steele; Scott, Dickens, Thackeray; Ruskin, Morris, Stevenson—all possessed it, yet how diverse the moulds into which it ran, even when the ideas treated chanced to be alike! The wonder of language is inexhaustible, but so common that rarely do we give it a thought. By a certain series of tiny marks upon paper our wishes, our opinions, our love, hate, sorrow, fear, can be conveyed to millions of other human beings; and by the manner in which a man arranges and uses these twenty-six impish little shapes he may rise to be among the greatest in the land—may himself be loved, hated, or feared by people he has never seen or known. "Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised," says Carlyle. A great book is imperishable, whereas "mighty fleets and armies, harbours and arsenals, vast cities, high-domed, many-engined—they are precious; but what do they become?" To explain

this property of greatness, however, the attribute of style must be accepted, and by that one word we judge the outpourings of all men in all ages, from the most malevolent invective, the most pompous rhetoric, to the simplest effects of pure description.

Most modern authors show traces of some particularly admired predecessor in their writings, or acknowledge their indebtedness to him as does a pupil to his famous master. Precisely as Mr. Henry James frankly admits his literary debt to Honoré de Balzac, so Mr. Swinburne sat at the feet of Gamaliel in the person of Victor Hugo—"the spiritual sovereign of the nineteenth century," as he termed his idol. In his remarkable book "A Study of Victor Hugo"—remarkable for a fervour and a fluency which has seldom been equalled, we imagine, by any English author, we have a declaration of his faith, and, be it added with all due respect and admiration for the marvellous flood of brilliant phrases and reverberant polysyllables, an extravagance of laudation which seems in danger of defeating its own ends. A sentence at the opening of the volume sets the note:—

For us, who from childhood upwards have fostered and fortified whatever of good was born in us—all capacity of spiritual work, all seed of human sympathy, all powers of hope and faith, all passions and aspirations found loyal to the service of duty and of love—with the bread of his deathless word and the wine of his immortal song, the one thing possible to do in this first hour of bitterness and stupefaction at the sense of a loss not possible yet to realise is not to proclaim his praise or parade our lamentation in modulated effects or efforts of panegyric or of dirge: it is to reckon up once more the standing account of our all but incalculable debt.

It is no small strain to write to that standard all through the book, and it is no small strain to the reader to follow it. The very fertility, persistence, and facility of the eulogy seem to make for weakness; it is debatable whether this tribute of a great poet to a greater would not have gained in critical value and in power by the adoption of a less continuous and exhausting profusion of praise. Quotations are numerous from the French poet, but the reader is taken by the shoulders, as it were, to confront them with his ears ringing out the resonance of preceding English paragraphs; he is credited with meagre faculties of appreciation of his own. We chanced upon a copy of this volume a few weeks ago wherein the following passage was underscored:—

In the sixth book I can but rapidly remark the peculiar beauty and greatness of the lyric lines in which the sound of steady seas regularly breaking on the rocks at Rozel Tower is rendered with so solemn and severe an echo of majestic strength in sadness; the verses addressed to the people on its likeness and unlikeness to the sea; the scornful and fiery appeal to the spirit of Juvenal; the perfect idyllic picture of spring, with all the fruitless exultation of its blossoms and its birds, made suddenly dark and dissonant by recollection of human crime and shame; the heavenly hopefulness of comfort in the message of the morning star, conveyed into colours of speech and translated into cadences of sound which no painter or musician could achieve.

The pencilled comment of some rebellious reader upon this, in the margin, was "Euphuism run riot!" A student might perhaps be pardoned, however truly he esteemed the sincerity of the paragraph, for feeling slightly nettled at its flamboyance and alliteration—it is full steam ahead and rush all the signals, without doubt. Proceeding a little farther into the volume we have other instances of this style, which, to employ Dr. Johnson's metaphor, is a very "laced coat" indeed:—

The first poem of the seventh book, on the falling of the walls of Jericho before the seventh trumpet-blast, is equally great

in description and in application; the third is one of the great lyric masterpieces of all time, the triumphant ballad of the Black Huntsman, unsurpassed in the world for ardour of music and fitful change of note from mystery and terror to rage and tempest and supreme serenity of exultation. "Wind and storm fulfilling his word," we may literally say of this omnipotent sovereign of song. . . . The song on the two Napoleons is a masterpiece of skilful simplicity in contrast of tones and colours. But the song which follows, written to a tune of Beethoven's, has in it something more than the whole soul of music, the whole passion of self-devoted hope and self-transfiguring faith; it gives the final word of union between sound and spirit, the mutual coronation and consummation of them both. And then comes a poem so great that I hardly dare venture to attempt a word in its praise. We cannot choose but think, as we read or repeat it, that "such music was never made" since the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. . . . It is simply impossible that a human tongue should utter, a human hand should write, anything of more supreme and transcendent beauty than the last ten stanzas of the fourth division of this poem. The passionate and fervent accumulation of sublimities, of marvellous images and of infinite appeal, leaves the sense too dazzled, the soul too entranced and exalted, to appreciate at first or in full the miraculous beauty of the language, the superhuman sweetness of the song.

The whole volume is a pageant of applaudive adjectives and intensifying adjectival phrases—"utterly incomparable," "ineffable," "most divine," "most absolutely and adorably beautiful book ever written," "nothing has ever been conceived more perfect"—such are a few of the banner-bearers in the procession.

Let it be clearly understood that we are not questioning the worthiness of that great and kingly poet, Victor Hugo; we merely state what we believe to be true—that the value of his disciple's homage would have been enhanced and equilibrated had he not released such an Euroclydon of acclamation.

On whatever subject he wrote, Mr. Swinburne's prose was astounding: it leaves the reader breathless; it ransacks the mother-tongue, ascends the heights, searches the deeps, and leaves the middle levels for milder men. To illustrate its power when the author has found a foe worthy of his steel, we may take a passage or two from his judgment of Walt Whitman—whose irregular and harsh versification and casual rhyming would be, we can well believe, as gall and wormwood to so masterly a melodist. This article appears in the "Studies in Prose and Poetry," and is entitled "Whitmania." We quote its opening sentence:

The remarkable American rhapsodist who has inoculated a certain number of English readers and writers with the singular form of ethical and æsthetical rabies for which his name supplies the proper medical term of definition is usually regarded by other than Whitmaniacs as simply a blatant quack—a vehement and emphatic dunce, of incomparable vanity and volubility, inconceivable pretension and incompetence.

He proceeds to explain that such is by no means his own view; but if ever a man was "damned with faint praise," Whitman was by Mr. Swinburne—witness the summing-up of the whole matter:

His sympathies, I repeat, are usually generous, his views of life are occasionally just, and his views of death are invariably noble. In other words, he generally means well, having a good stock on hand of honest emotion; he sometimes sees well, having a natural sensibility to such aspects of nature as appeal to an eye rather quick than penetrating; he seldom writes well, being cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in, to the limits of a thoroughly unnatural, imitative, histrionic and affected style. But there is a thrilling and fiery force in his finest bursts of gusty rhetoric which makes us wonder whether with a little more sense and a good deal more cultivation he might not have made a noticeable orator.

There is a leonine wrath about this verdict; one imagines a lion might play in similar manner with his victim before dispatching him.

In his wildest exuberance of prose, it must be noted that Mr. Swinburne's language was never dishevelled; it was an orderly intoxication, a progress tempestuous and at times almost riotous, but never breaking from the trammels of correctness. If the chains of flowery decoration are occasionally wound so tightly round the meaning that they become thongs and manacles whereby freedom of transmission of the idea is endangered it is permissible to think that they had better have been used more sparingly or more judiciously. The suspension and the prolonged adverbial and adjectival phrase are characteristic of Mr. Swinburne's prose—there is a sentence containing nearly three hundred words in the dedicatory epistle of the last edition of his "Poems"—and it was congruous with this desire for elaboration that he should select ornate symbols rather than simple ones to utter his thought. Often he succeeded perfectly; sometimes he failed. What is an ordinary reader to gather from such a phrase as "the unspoken expression of hopeless and inexpressible regret"?—which occurs in the "Studies" from which we have just been quoting. He is bound to retreat, vanquished, though with an inkling of the thought that burned behind the baffling screen of words.

The estimate of the fiction of Wilkie Collins in the same volume is acute and convincing. The paper dealing with Robert Herrick seems to have been interrupted in mid-career and never finished—it concludes with disappointing abruptness just as the reader is anticipating one of those radiant disquisitions which only the author could pen, and which are calculated to exhilarate and satisfy the most querulous or captious critic. The analysis of the art of Beaumont and Fletcher, however, is intimate and full of persuasive suggestion. The remainder of the volume concerns itself chiefly with Victor Hugo, but has also a fine essay in French on "Les Cenci," from which we may take one sentence of interest to lovers of Shelley:

Ôtez à Shelley sa foi sublime, son dévouement héroïque, son amour du droit et de l'idéal, il sera toujours un des plus grands poètes de tous les siècles.

Another excursion into criticism, "A Study of Ben Jonson," demands more than a mere allusion. Mr. Swinburne himself would have been the last person to term it an exhaustive judgment, but when he wrote it down as "a most imperfect and inadequate commentary" he offered us an unnecessary depreciation of his work. For its space, and considering the indefatigable pen of the old-time Laureate, it is probably a more illuminating, vigorous, and original exposition than any other contemporary critic could have brought forward; and if we find it in us to regret the absence of a chapter or a minor division devoted exclusively to such an appreciation of Jonson's few fine lyrics as could only come from Mr. Swinburne, again, we must note that the whole book has a terseness and an equilibrium which render complaints somewhat ungrateful. There is an occasional play of humour, too, in this volume, which comes as a relief to the steady severity of examination and interpretation. In a momentary digression on the work of Rutter, Ben's "dear son, and right learned friend," we hear a note that does not often sound:

His spiritual father or theatrical sponsor is most copious and most cordial in his commendations of the good man's pastoral drama; he has not mentioned its one crowning excellence—the quality for which, having tried it every night for upwards of six weeks running, I can confidently and conscientiously recom-

mend it. Chloral is not only more dangerous but very much less certain as a soporific; the sleeplessness which could resist the influence of Mr. Rutter's verse can be curable only by dissolution; the eyes which can keep open through the perusal of six consecutive pages must never hope to find rest but in the grave.

Modern journalism is arraigned *en passant* with no stint of energy:

. . . that bird of many notes and many feathers, now so like an eagle and now so like a vulture; now soaring as a falcon or sailing as a pigeon over continents and battlefields, now grovelling and groping as a dunghill kite, with its beak in a very middenstead of falsehood and of filth.

But, as a metaphor, nothing could surpass the comparison in the last sentence of the following passage, in which the author illustrates the curious fact that Jonson's imitators and admirers eclipsed him completely in the lyric quality of their art:

Herrick, as a writer of elegies, epithalamiums, panegyrical or complimentary verses, is as plainly and as openly an imitator of his model as ever was the merest parasite of any leading poet, from the days of Chaucer and his satellites to the days of Tennyson and his. No Lydgate or Lytton was ever more obsequious in his discipleship; but for all his loving and loyal protestations of passionate humility and of ardent reverence, we see at every turn, at every step, at every change of note, that what the master could not do the pupil can. When Chapman set sail after Marlowe, he went floundering and lurching in the wake of a vessel that went straight and smooth before the fullest and the fairest wind of song; but when Herrick follows Jonson the manner of movement or the method of progression is reversed.

In the discussion of "Cynthia's Revels," one of Jonson's "magnificent mistakes," we have the real rich and unmistakable vocabulary once more:

There is an exquisite song in it and there are passages—nay, there are scenes—of an excellent prose; but the intolerable elaboration of pretentious dulness and ostentatious ineptitude for which the author claims not merely the tolerance or the condonation which gratitude or charity might accord to the misuse or abuse of genius, but the acclamation due to its exercise and the applause demanded by its triumph—the heavy-headed perversity which ignores all the duties and reclaims all the privileges of a dramatic poet—the Cyclopean ponderosity of perseverance which hammers through scene after scene at the task of ridicule by anatomy of tedious and preposterous futilities—all these too conscientious outrages offered to the very principle of comedy, of poetry, or of drama, make us wonder that we have no record of a retort from the exhausted audience—if haply there were any auditors left—to the dogged defiance of the epilogue:—

By God, 'tis good, and if you like 't you may.  
By God, 'tis bad, and worse than tongue can say.

For the most noticeable point in this studiously wayward and laboriously erratic design is that the principle of composition is as conspicuous by its absence as the breath of inspiration; that the artist, the scholar, the disciple, the student of classic models, is as indiscernible as the spontaneous humourist or poet. The wildest, the roughest, the crudest offspring of literary impulse working blindly on the passionate elements of excitable ignorance was never more formless, more incoherent, more defective in structure, than this voluminous abortion of deliberate intelligence and conscientious culture.

The scheme of our present article would show as out of drawing did we omit to include some mention of Mr. Swinburne's only venture into the field of fiction. "Love's Cross-Currents," as most of our readers will be aware, is written in the form of letters, with a lengthy prologue which elucidates the relationships of the actors in the comedy—for in the main it is a comedy of tangled skeins and lovers in the un-

kindly grip of fate; at times, however, it borders on the domain of tragedy.

The book seems to have been a production of its author's "literary youth," given to the world at the urgent suggestion of his friend Mr. Watts-Dunton; but it might well pass in some aspects—especially those of style and clarity of thought—as the work of a mature hand. Clarity of plot it can hardly be said to possess until the reader is well into the story and has the various personages with their entanglements fairly assorted in his mind; then the almost laborious concentration which was previously necessary can be slackened, the pleasure of the book begins, and the attention is that of appreciation, not so much that of one who solves a puzzle. One great disadvantage of casting a story in the epistolatory mould is that dialogue to a large extent becomes forbidden; there is little relief of smart question and answer, badinage or *riposte*, and unless some of the letter-writers are endowed by their creator with a strongly humorous outlook on life the romance will run into danger of heaviness—assisted partly by the sheer unbroken appearance of page after page of level, regular print. Nothing approaching so undesirable a doom can be attributed to "Love's Cross-Currents"; for, although there is no exuberant youth or effervescence of frivolity about any of the characters, they each and all weave vividly and distinctly their allotted thread in the pattern. Lady Midhurst, who pulls the strings as well as she can in the endeavour to sort out these troublesome young people, is rather a terrible person; pungent, sarcastic, and pitiless at times, yet with an apologetic air of saying it all for the welfare of the children, grandchildren, and nephews about whose destinies she is so worried that quite takes the sting from her aristocratic fulminations. To one of the impetuous and unduly amorous young men she writes:

I give you a month, my dear boy, to get over your rage at me; then I shall expect you to behave equably. Till that time I suppose I must let you "chew the thrice-turned cud of wrath." Otherwise I should beg you not to make one of the south-coast party I hear of. . . . As it is, I see you will join the rest, and waste your time and wits, besides sinking chin-deep in Platonic sloughs of love. Some day I may succeed in pulling you out. I dare say it ought to be a comfort to me to reflect that you are doing no great harm; dirtier you might get, but scarcely wetter. The quagwater of sentiment will soak you to the bone. . . . Recollect my age, I entreat you. Can you expect sound judgment and accurate relish of the right thing from such an old critic as I am? You might as well hope to make me see her beauty with your eyes as appreciate her goodness in your fashion. And then, bad as I may be, we have been friends too long to break off. If I had ever had a son in my younger years things would have gone differently; as it was, I have always had to put up with you instead. A bad substitute you make, too; but somehow one gets used to that.

To the lady by whose charms this gentleman was stricken she writes announcing the birth of a girl-child to another of the circle:

Get your husband to take a human view of the matter—I suppose his ideas of a baby which is neither zoophyte nor fossil are rather of the vaporous and twilight order of thought—and bring him down for the christianising part of the show, if he will condescend so far. He could take a note or two on the process of animal development by stages, and the decidedly misty origin of that comic species to which our fat present sample of fleshly goods may belong.

To outline the plot would be impertinent to our purpose and quite unnecessary; the title is admirably chosen and sufficiently hints the general tenour of affairs in the story. We should echo the thought, we dare say, of a great many persons to whom Mr. Swinburne's work both in prose and poetry is precious, if

we expressed regret that he never saw fit to write, or at any rate to publish, a romance of modern times in the accepted manner—that of mingled narrative and dialogue. Had he been inspired to do this by some impressive and critical situation which might present itself to his mind as worthy of attempted resolution in this form, there would have been no lack of readers on tiptoe of excitement and anticipation, for with his marvellous felicities of diction and apparently inexhaustible arsenals of swift metaphor he might surely have projected a work which would live worthily with any of Mr. Meredith's masterpieces. We can fancy that his hero and heroine would be persons in whose lips speech would be golden and silence silver. To the novelist we come nearer, somehow, than to the poet; the poet dwells on heights apart, the novelist walks with his fellow-men, becomes to them more of a personality, has less of an abstract existence, knows and is known of them. So much, however, for our dreaming of what might have been.

To endeavour to analyse the poetic art of this "Hero as man of Letters" in a few closing sentences would be as presumptuous as it would be futile. "A human soul who has once got into that primal element of Song, and sung forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the depths of our existence."

The Poet's is not always a creative art; too often his voice is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, bringing no definite message, however, no thrill to make the heart throb faster. But here came a new voice, "singing forth fitly," uttering strange and searching music, music of the mysterious sea and the wave-haunted shore, ravishing the ear and captivating all who paused to listen. "The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; a character which does not pass; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce—and will produce, always when Nature pleases." And such melody as such a poet makes, belongs, we conclude irresistibly, to the singer whose prose we have been discussing; it is not that of sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, but that of sublime harmonies which time will hardly overwhelm. Time is the great and final critic of all things fashioned by human hands and brains; generations come and go; the beating of the pinions of hastening years whirls the chaff into the darkness, and to earth remains the fruitful seed of blooms that are past—seed to germinate and blossom in future ages, for the wonder and welfare of cities yet unbuilded, of humanity yet unborn. Other poets will read, will admire, will imitate in those hidden years; but it is possible that never again from the lips of any one man will flow so rich a volume of music, so splendid a revel of song.

## THE "OLD FIRM" IN PUBLISHING

From the *Book Monthly* we cull the following pretty words:

Is a new force, that may cause things to happen, arising in the London publishing world? The close observer puts the question to himself about the Publishers' Circle, which is certainly beginning to make its influence felt in a practical way.

We may say of it that it is the young publishers knocking at the door—yes, at the doors of the literary agent and the author, in particular. In folk-lore and fairy tales the circle is a magical thing and potent, and possibly the Publishers' Circle has been better named than its christeners knew.

Simple lunching and practical thinking, this might be adopted as the motto of the Circle, which, in its essence, is a social body, an expression of good fellowship among the younger spirits of publishing. But good fellowship and good business may be good comrades; especially when

they lunch with Spartan frugality. So in both senses the Publishers' Circle must now be counted a force. Nay, it is a growing force which may make its mark not merely on the book world, viewed as a trade, but on the new English literature which that trade places in the hands of the people.

"Simple lunching and practical thinking" are admirable, especially as both have hitherto been entirely out of the compass of the average book manufacturer. We naturally rejoice to hear also that the Young Publishers (Heaven bless them!) are knocking—yes, knocking—at the doors of the literary agent and the author in particular. Let them knock; it will do them good. Meanwhile, however, the *Book Monthly* might endeavour to take the sand out of its eye; inasmuch as when the *Book Monthly* babbles of the "new English literature," which the Young Publisher (Heaven bless him!) is placing in the hands of the people, the *Book Monthly* is getting right away from decent literary journalism. Nobody can look through the lists of the Young Publisher without perceiving that in his hands English literature simply cannot exist. In consequence, no doubt, of his frugal lunches his mind is just as much set on English literature as it is set on the middle of next week. In point of fact, he abhors English literature and abhors it from the depth of his soul. And he abhors it with all the deeper an abhorrence now that he finds it impossible to sell his cheap lines in classics and his cut-throat reprints of works newly out of copyright. The new literature our fine young gentleman is placing in the hands of the people is always scandalously illiterate and frequently obscene, or, as he choicely puts it, "very hot" to boot. His "successes"—and it is for rapid and colossal successes that he pants, as the hart pants after the waterbrook or as Texas pants for Taft—are invariably and without exception based upon material which is a disgrace to letters and a standing monument to the havoc which the Education Act and an unscrupulous hapenny press have wrought upon the mentality and moral outlook of the country. The *Book Monthly* will probably learn before it is much older that the Young Publishers are worth precious little to anybody and absolutely nothing to English literature. After writing most charmingly and in its best Shorterian manner about the Publishers' Circle, our contemporary prints an interview with Mr. Arthur Waugh, who is the "first chairman" of the Publishers' Circle, and who is described by the *Book Monthly* as "man of letters and managing director of the old publishing house of Chapman and Hall." Now, Mr. Arthur Waugh has never figured in our mind's eye as a Young Publisher. In point of fact, he is not a Young Publisher; and even the *Book Monthly* is very careful to get in the epithet "old" when it speaks of the publishing house of Chapman and Hall. Neither is it anything but flattery to say of Mr. Arthur Waugh that he is a man of letters. What has he done, said or written to justify such a description of him? He used to be a journalist, and he has executed without discredit a considerable amount of hack writing for publishers. There is nothing in the least distinguished or extraordinary to his account, and it would be just as fair to call him poet as to call him man of letters—unless, of course, one were to do it in the sense that Mr. Pawling, of Heinemann's, was once dubbed "author." It is singular, too, that in "Who's Who" this Mr. Waugh writes himself down "author." And especially is it singular in view of the fact that in the course of the *Book Monthly*'s interview Mr. Waugh goes out of his way to make a direct attack upon the honour of authors as a body. It is true that in making this attack Mr. Waugh would appear to have got frightened the moment the word author slipped out of his mouth. Here is what he is reported to have said:

It has been, for instance, quite a common thing for a bookseller to assure a publisher that he is getting much better terms from a colleague in the same street, and until the Circle was instituted I think it will be agreed that it was seldom that publishers would compare notes upon matters of this kind. The same thing is true of authors, or, rather, perhaps one should say of authors' agents. It has been the commonest thing for an agent to come to a publisher with a book, assuring him of the enormous sales which some other firm has had for the same author's last book, and upon the strength of these representations large advances have been paid which, as a matter of fact, could never have been earned.

Mr. Waugh proceeds to tell a fearful story of a literary agent who "came to our firm offering a book by an author, the sale of whose last work, he assured me, had amounted to 5,000 copies. I told him I was confident that this was not the case. He replied by assuring me that it was. When the agent had left the room I rang up the publisher of the book in question, and he informed me that the entire sales had amounted to 572 copies!" "The same thing," says Mr. Waugh, "is true of authors." Mr. Waugh may or may not be able to produce his instance; we doubt if he has an instance worth the name. Authors do not lie about their sales. In the first place, he is a wise author who in the course even of a lifetime can discover what his sales really are. There is not a literary agent in London who, if he were so disposed, could fail to prove by documentary evidence that the Young Publishers, at any rate, are exceedingly handy with the royalty account, and that if you do not watch them the chances are that your sales will be grossly understated and your cheque, which, nine times out of ten, is a wonderfully belated cheque, is much smaller than it ought to be. Even where an inspection of the publisher's books is stipulated for in an author's contract it is the most difficult thing in the world to arrive at the real statement of sales. This is common knowledge; and no one in his senses doubts it. On the other hand, we admit that it is difficult of proof; largely because the literary agents dare not open their mouths on the subject and the average author is equally afraid. Besides which, when such cases are actually brought home to a publisher he always gets behind the excuse of "defective book-keeping." A publisher does not keep his own books, and you must not hold him morally responsible for the carelessness of his clerks. Which is fudge, but it serves. Not many years ago the head of a publishing house, who is considered one of the "smartest men of business" in the trade, was examined in bankruptcy. And on being questioned closely as to the state of his accounts he solemnly assured the court that he was not a man of business and that he had been in the habit of leaving these matters to his accountants.

Mr. Waugh has told the *Book Monthly* that "this sort of thing"—meaning the exaggeration of authors or authors' agents—"has been largely put a stop to by the mutual confidence of members of the Publishers' Circle." On this question of sales alone we wonder what would happen if the members of the Publishers' Circle were to tell one another all they know, say, about other publishers' methods of account-keeping and general dealing with authors. And we wonder what would happen to the Young Publishers if the authors and editors of London were to form an Authors' Circle for cheap lunches and mutual confidences. At the first meeting of such a Circle we could produce, for our own part, a few highly exhilarating documents which tend to show that the Young Publishers are a very bright and engaging company. We could exhibit, for example, a royalty account which has been rendered in a beautiful commercial hand twice at the end of periods of six months—unaccompanied by the harmless necessary cheque. We could exhibit, also, a correspondence which proves that £80 was paid to an author in

settlement of royalties by a publishing firm which is still doing business in London and which asserted thrice in writing that there were no royalties due to the author, and that the book had resulted in a loss. And we could exhibit, further, the cheque of a well-known publishing house which has been twice dishonoured during the last three months, and which still remains unpaid. Of course, these things have nothing to do with Mr. Arthur Waugh or Messrs. Chapman and Hall, or with the members of the Publishers' Circle, who, for anything we know to the contrary, conduct their business on legitimate and straightforward lines. But if Mr. Arthur Waugh, whether as man of letters or managing director of Messrs. Chapman and Hall, or as chairman of the Publishers' Circle, begins to make sweeping and *ex parte* charges against authors he will find that it is quite easy for the very next person who knows anything about authorship to produce a hundred particular and disconcerting charges against the publishing trade. The best thing the Publishers' Circle can do is to go on exchanging its mutual confidences and to keep them strictly to itself. Lie low and say nothing!

We have not yet finished with Mr. Arthur Waugh. He is reported by the *Book Monthly* to have committed himself to the following statements:

Personally, I feel that most of us are willing to pay an author whatever his book can fairly earn. The competition for good books becomes keener every year, and everyone wants to have a strong list, so long as there is room for reasonable profit, or—on the lowest basis—so long as there is no loss. In the past, however, this competition has been allowed to gain ground to such an extent that authors have been frequently receiving as much—or half as much—again as their books have any chance of earning. In the future it ought to be increasingly possible, through the exertions of the Circle, for an author to get just as much for his book as he is entitled to—and no more.

It is clear from these words that Mr. Waugh is possessed of a curious intelligence. Did he, as author or man of letters, ever hear of an author or man of letters who can get more than the worth of a book or anything like the worth of a book in the way of an advance on account of royalties? Of course, the stock answer to these queries is that Mr. So-and-so was paid £3,000 on account of royalties in such a year, and Messrs. So-and-so, who paid, burnt their fingers to the tune of £500. Or again, that in such a year Miss So-and-so was paid £3,000, and that Messrs. So-and-so have still a large remainder of the book, which they will be glad to sell at remainder prices. Such things have happened, and nobody denies it. But the publishing trade does not build fine houses and keep valets and winter at Monte Carlo out of jobs of this sort. Taking authors in the lump, we doubt if they ever obtain more than a third of the real value of a book by way of advance on account of royalties. And as for an author being paid for his book "just as much as he is entitled to and no more," who in the name of goodness is to decide with such nicety what he is entitled to? It can be proved that when the decision is left with the publisher the author usually receives from £20 to £30 for a novel of from 90,000 to 100,000 words. And, as a matter of fact, if the publishers had their way no author would be paid a penny-piece, but would rather be invited to contribute to the initial expenses of publication. Nobody can really decide what a book is worth until it has been published and sold. If the Publishers' Circle intend to decide, you may wager your old hat that they will decide with enormous margins in favour of the publisher. Mr. Waugh is most anxious to assure the world at large that there is nothing in the least antagonistic to authors in the Publishers' Circle. We must take him at his word, but we shall, nevertheless, advise all authors, young, old or betwixt and between, to squeeze out of their publishers as much money as ever

they can and to keep all they get; because, with all their getting, they are unlikely to approximate to their just dues. The talk now so common among publishers as to friendliness and mutual understanding between author and publisher is mere and sheer nonsense. Not very long ago we had the spectacle of a bankrupt publisher's wife writing in the *Times* to advocate "confidence" between author and publisher. It were just as reasonable to advocate confidence between the tiger and the lamb. Where is the working author, who, having yielded up his confidence and put aside his caution and common-sense, has not had bitter cause for regretting it? Shall we receive a single letter from an author who will say that "Messrs. So-and-so, the publishers, have had the control of the whole of my books for five years past, and I consider that I have been justly treated by them"? Why is it that when you want a complete set of an author's works you have to get them from pretty nearly as many publishers as he happens to have written books? We shall be told, of course, that the author or his agent is an unfair, unreasonable and greedy person, whom nothing can content, and who is always wanting more money. But he changes his publishers when he can get more money, and when a new publisher will offer him more for a book than he has been in the habit of getting. The inference is plain. The whole question is full of difficulties for people who do not wish to understand it, and it bristles with opportunities for the raising of false issues. Broadly, however, the root of the trouble lies in the publisher's ingrained contempt for literature and his besotted admiration for saleable claptrap. There is not a publisher in London who would plunk down a penny-piece on literature *qua* literature until the author of it has achieved sales. If a fine book by a new hand goes into certain publishing offices the inevitable result is a letter from the publishers explaining to the author that his reader "thinks well of the work," but that as it is a first book it would be necessary for the author to contribute, say, £100 to the cost of publication. For the author's talents, for the author's labour, not to mention his good sense, the publisher thus shows an impudent contempt. All the time he has before him a reader's report, in which the book is extolled and recommended as a saleable article, and in point of fact, he is quite prepared to print the book at his own risk, or, for that matter, to pay the author as much as £100 on account of a ten or a fifteen per cent. royalty. Yet he will try first to get money out of the author, and, failing that, to get possession of the book for nothing. Even your author who has "made sales" can never be sure of a market for anything which does not happen to be fiction. A publisher cannot look at any writer outside of what the publishers consider to be that writer's "line." The author who writes a novel which happens to sell is doomed to novel-writing for the rest of his life. And nine times out of ten his work brings him less and less money as the years go by. If he achieves a "success" he is told that he is extremely unlikely to do it again, and must, therefore, content himself with a small advance. And if by any chance he produces a "failure"—and a man's failures are not always his worst work—he will never get over it till his dying day. The fact is that books are not nowadays considered on their literary merits at all. Before the average publisher will venture a shilling his desire is to be bolstered up by certificates of previous sales and with assurances from his travellers that they can sell the book. Failing these, he must have money down from the author or the right to publish without payment. We do not wish to rail against publishers as a class, if they will only stick to business. But when they begin to pose as the friends and patrons of letters and the well-wishers and benefactors of authors we shall always take leave to dissent.

## REVIEWS

### A FIFTEENTH CENTURY RATIONALIST

*Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith.* Edited, with an introductory essay by J. L. MORISON, M.A. (Maclehose & Sons, 5s. net.)

MR. MORISON'S book deserves careful consideration, if only for the care which he has bestowed upon it, and in many respects it is a successful work. It contains a preface, an essay on the development of fifteenth century opinion, a summary of the contents of Pecock's text, the text itself, a glossary, an index of the authors quoted in "The Book of Faith," and a general index to the volume. The preface is occupied with the unique manuscript now printed for the first time, which was presented by Whitgift to Trinity College, Cambridge. According to Dr. Montague James it is written in a hand of the early fifteenth century, and contains many marginal notes, some of them almost as early as the manuscript itself." Three pages later, Mr. Morison concludes that "'The Book of Faith' may be placed somewhere about 1456," a highly likely date. No one has placed it as early as 1447, and Mr. Morison states positively that the manuscript was the one corrected up-to-date for use in 1457. This is also very likely, but he gives no reasons for his statement. He accounts for cross-references in "The Book of Faith" and another of Pecock's books, "The Represser," reasonably enough, by supposing a habit of his of writing several works concurrently. The discrepancy between these dates Mr. Morison leaves unnoticed. It is curious that in tracing the uses made of the book he should have omitted all mention of what at least is a curious coincidence. In the controversy between Whitgift, who owned the manuscript, and Thomas Cartwright on the Admonition to the Parliament about 1572, Whitgift shows a cast of thought similar to Pecock's, especially in "The Represser." This is still more evident in the great book which was the outcome of that controversy, Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity."

As regards the text, Mr. Morison states that the spelling of the manuscript with all its variations has been retained, except in cases of obvious absurdity, etc. It is a great pity that he made any exceptions at all, and that the runic *th* was not retained, however insignificant. Absurdity and insignificance are of the essence of English spelling from first to last. A manuscript should be printed, especially for the first time, *litteratim*, even *erratim*. Otherwise its accuracy becomes suspect, particularly at the present time, for there is a great deal of dishonest carelessness in popular editions, ostensibly exact, which are "generally edited" wholesale by professors of scholarship who ought to know better than to lend their official authority to supervision too comprehensive for them to perform it adequately. The publishers are not to blame. Mr. Morison is perfectly candid, if his judgment is open to criticism, but it is time that some protest was made, and it is made here, because it has no personal application to him.

The glossary is exactly sufficient, very few words, if any, should be added, and it has an interest in itself. A glance at it is sufficient to learn several curious forms in use at the period, particularly, *arumme*, far (a-room) from; *colum*, a dove (colomkill, columba); *Donet*, a primer; *myir*, mire (some justification for using such words as dissyllables); *stid*, a place, and *stideli*, with *hild*, a lean-to (forms of the Scandinavian *sted* and *held*); *slider*, slippery (still used locally, "slick and slider," also Scandinavian and really meaning "worn"); *tikel*, delicate; and *squaymose*, an early

form of the later, useful, "squamous," which now, again, might be criticised as a pedantic Latinism. Reference to the glossary, however, is seldom necessary in reading Pecock's text, even to the inexperienced in fifteenth century English, if they keep their heads and use their wits. In fact, the quaintness of the forms will help to carry them through the horrible verbosity and confusion of Pecock's style. The atmosphere of Mr. Morison's introduction suggests excuses in the supposed illiteracy of the period. There are no excuses, nor was the period in the least illiterate. If it is not fair to cite the prose of Sir John Maundeville and of Chaucer, Pecock had among his other immediate predecessors an excellent model in the prose of a perfectly clear writer on kindred subjects, Wyclif. He compares equally badly with his contemporaries, such as Sir John Fortescue, Caxton, and even the Paston and other Fenn letters. He was, in fact, the worst writer of his period, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that his confused style is the expression of confusion of thought. This is the more remarkable, since he was very learned and a thinker of considerable force and originality, though his editors all tend to exaggerate these qualities, representing him as a sort of founder of English rationalism. This arises partly from entire inability to realise the mediæval spirit, and partly to that concealment of the Middle Ages by modern writers which almost amounts to a policy. Mr. Morison is no exception to this rule, for though he writes with candour and no more than legitimate sympathy with his subject, he forgets or ignores the intellectual and artistic activity of Pecock's period even in England, though it was not on a level at that time with the rest of civilised Europe. He is particularly unfortunate in his reference to the poetry of the period. Pecock, he says, "was the man of a depressing time and country. Round him dull poets were chanting, in broken notes, of hopeless subjects." He forgets that Chaucer was as accessible to the men of the fifteenth century as to those of any other period, for though printing had not multiplied copies of his works, they were written in the current language of the day. And he forgets that a large number of his own contemporaries as capable of judging as himself still regard Chaucer as unequalled by any English poet since except Shakespeare and Milton. He also forgets that two excellent lyric poets of James I. and Charles d'Orleans were both writing in England during Pecock's lifetime, with five or six minor poets such as Gower, Hoccleve, Lydgate and Capgrave, quite equal in merit to the poets of secondary rank in the Elizabethan or Carolingian periods; and above all that the reign of Henry VI. was remarkable for beautiful popular lyrics, if Pecock had had the imagination and taste to appreciate them.

Pecock's honesty of purpose, his isolation, the evident fact that he was condemned largely for political reasons, which Mr. Morison does not sufficiently explain, do entitle him to our sympathy, but it is alienated by his ridiculous vanity, his sophistry, and the futility of his objects. His course was such as to lead him inevitably to the faggots at any time when they were used to clinch an argument, and the recantation by which he avoided them seems to have been inspired less by fear than by the recognition that the expression of his speculations were not worth either death or excommunication from the Church, which he acknowledged as a credible witness to truths beyond the reach of reason. Mr. Morison also does not make it sufficiently clear that Pecock, though threatened with the stake, was not actually deposed from his bishopric, and that his theories were never condemned by Rome. He appealed to Rome and a new trial was ordered, the documents of which, together with Pecock himself, were to be sent to Rome. This never took

place, Pecock considering it wiser to resign his see and accept the punishment inflicted at the first trial, rather than run the risks of a second English trial which might have resulted in the stake in defiance of the Pope's authority. It is not yet sufficiently clear whether Pecock's theories were technically heretical or not. Their unorthodoxy has been exaggerated by English writers, formerly with the desire to represent him as a precursor of the Reformation, latterly as a pioneer of rationalism. He has even been regarded as a follower of Wyclif, though, as he states, he spent twenty years in arguing against Lollardy. His writings give grounds for both the former views, but quite inadequate grounds, for they also combat the theory that the Bible was the sole guide in faith and morals, and strongly support the authority of the Church and defend many customs equally obnoxious to Protestantism and Rationalism. Nor does it appear at all certain, as Mr. Morison seems to suppose, because he wrote on important religious matters to the people in the vernacular, but because he addressed to them obscure speculations in ambiguous terms. Though Mr. Morison points out that Pecock incurred odium by his supposed attack on the exposition of the faith in sermons when he preached at St. Paul's Cross, he seems to suppose that the doctrines of the Church were not expounded in the vernacular, and thus again shows an inability to grasp the mediæval idea. If Pecock was even an incipient rationalist in the modern acceptance of the term, like so many others he failed before the tribunal to which he appealed, for he does not carry his arguments to their inevitable consequences, so that they are singularly unconvincing. Mr. Morison, too, in his enthusiasm for reason, seems to forget that an appeal to reason in its low forms also led in Pecock's time as it does now to irrational consequences.

## CANON FLEMING

*Life of Canon Fleming.* By ARTHUR FINLAYSON.  
(James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 6s. net.)

In giving to the world this timely appreciation of a true gentleman and a thorough-going follower of the highest ideals, the Rev. Arthur Finlayson has acted wisely. For many years Canon Fleming was a well-known figure in the religious life of London, and the echoes of tributes which came from all quarters at the news of his death last autumn have not yet died away. His ministry as Vicar of St. Michael's, Chester Square, was a remarkable one—his congregation often included some of the wealthiest and most famous in the land and some of the poorest and least significant in his own parish, yet to them all he became beloved, a tower of strength, a man among men. His far-reaching influence came from no special distinction in argument, from no laurels of learning, but from the innate power and personality of the man himself. Humility was the keynote of his conduct—he refused positions the most coveted, strove mightily and happily for objects that were important only in their human relationships and results, served always unwaveringly the truth as his reason and his beliefs indicated it to him. The honour of Royal commands came frequently to him, and it gives a flash of insight into his comprehensive and genial character when we remember that the man thus favoured for his integrity and merit could at the same time interest himself in a coffee-house for the benefit of the poorer residents of his district, or spend quiet, simple hours at the babies' crèche connected with his church; it becomes an easy matter to understand why his welcome was so universal.

The value of this volume, however, lies not only in its depiction of the lowly and loyal spirit whose thoughts and aspirations are thus illumined. Canon Fleming met many notable men of his time, and the plentiful reminiscences add greatly to the interest of the work. Macready was a personal friend of his, and several of the famous actor's letters are reproduced; a common bond between the two was their extreme appreciation of the faculty of elocution. Many of our readers doubtless know the treatise entitled "The Art of Reading and Speaking," which Canon Fleming published, and which met with considerable success. Beaconsfield, Gladstone, Sir Andrew Clark, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Tennyson, Dean Farrar, Matthew Arnold—these are a few of the celebrities about whom we hear, either directly or indirectly. Miss Agnes Weston's magnificent enterprise, too, on behalf of the sailors of the Navy, is referred to at some length; it appears to have been due originally to a sermon of the Canon when he was in charge of All Saints', at Bath, in the year 1858. The letters which are quoted—perhaps a little too copiously quoted—contain much that is worthy of attention, and those to his son Malcolm—his "very dear Malcolm"—are charming. The concluding passage from one of the latter seems not without special point at the present day:

I do not agree with you as to the Conservatives being unpatriotic. I think you will live to confess that the unpatriotic man is a Prime Minister who, in order to stay in, humiliates his country in the eyes of all Europe, who cringes to Russia, and almost begs for peace *at any price*. I fear the Nemesis will be a deadly struggle for our very existence a little later on, if indeed Gladstone has not already ruined his country. With fondest love, ever your devoted FATHER.

Naturally, the biography of such a man as Canon Fleming would not lack a few good anecdotes. We may take one or two for our readers' amusement without trespassing indiscreetly on the author's forbearance. When lecturing at the St. John's Hall, Highbury, one of the Theological schools of the University of London, his patience with the students seems to have been a salient feature of the proceedings:

In the olden days at Shrewsbury, if a boy in construing a classical author made a false quantity, Dr. Kennedy would throw up his arms and exclaim: "Ah! the anguish of my soul! I'll give up education altogether!" But Fleming was always calm, self-controlled, courteous, and dignified. "We pronounce that 'stormy,'" he would quietly say to some unfortunate student who said "stawmy," and who would probably make the same mistake again. . . .

In the reading class he would occasionally allow his humour to appear. "Inattention to a triflē is enough to turn the best of reading into the worst vulgarity. Mind your stops; the comma may seem trivial, but it is often very important. At a banquet a man reading from the toast-list, 'Woman, without her, man would be a savage,' misplaced the comma and startled everyone by reading, 'Woman, without her man, would be a savage. Or again, a poor woman coming late to church wrote on a piece of paper: 'A sailor going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety.' The unfortunate curate read out to the astonished congregation: 'A sailor going to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety.'"

And there is a little *bon mot* attributed to Bishop Magee that is worthy of quotation:

On one occasion Mr. Gladstone met Magee and said, "I hear, my lord, that you don't quite approve of my dealing with the Irish question?" whereupon Magee, who possessed a wonderful gift of repartee, said, "It is not your dealing that I mind, Mr. Gladstone, it's your shuffling that I object to."

It is inevitable that in such a book as this, written by a warm personal friend and admirer, a certain amount of matter should occur which is of no particular

moment to the general reader. Portions of the lengthy extracts from testimonials, special sermons, letters, etc., which can only be slurred by persons who never had the privilege of knowing Canon Fleming, might conceivably have been omitted with advantage; some of the letters of appreciation, too, are from people whose opinions are not of any distinction. Apart from this quite explicable drawback, the book is one which will please all who ever heard or met the Canon, whether intimately or at the impersonal distance of the pulpit, and, as we have shown, its value extends beyond the bounds of his own personality. Reproductions of autograph letters from their Majesties Queen Alexandra and Queen Maud of Norway, and other Royalties, are appended, and a portrait of the Canon (facing page 338) deserves very special mention; it suggests the fine character, the inherent goodness of the man better than much writing could do. The whole book is a worthy memorial of one whose motto might well have been "Love in Action."

## SHORTER REVIEWS

*The Stairway of Honour.* By MAUD STEPNEY RAWSON. (Mills and Boon, 6s.)

THE division into three groups which the author has made in this volume of short stories is quite a happy idea. The first, "Tales of the Olden Days," explains itself; the second, "Tales of Yesterday," is concerned with bright little pictures of the eighteenth century; the third, "Tales of To-day," presents a few aspects of modern life. All the sketches are clever; one or two are little more than impressions, and perhaps lay themselves open to the charge of being "thin"; but we cannot all emulate the art of Mr. Henry James in the unparalleled cameos of his earlier period. To select a couple by name from those which merit special approval, we may indicate "Pepita and the King" as a pretty little idyll, in which a country lass opens her heart to a "regular royal" King, and talks to him with considerable frankness, imagining all the time that he was a person of no particular consequence; and, on the modern side, the story of "The Marriage Merchant" is rather a smart piece of work. "A Visit to the Enchantress," however, strikes a very improbable and strained note. Unequal quality is, of course, inseparable from any collection of short tales, and it is pleasant to record that in this case the average is high.

*For Church and Chieftain.* By MAY WYNNE. (Mills and Boon, 6s.)

WE believe that this book is of the description which from most newspaper critics obtains the title of "a stirring romance." "Stirring" seems to be a somewhat apt word in this connection, since we are irresistibly reminded of the formula generally associated with cookery-books—take two or three pairs of lovers, a few castles, a secret passage, some hairsbreadth escapes and perilous adventures, stir well together and serve in a stormy period of history, and the final result ought to please all reasonable people. For some cause or other this story fails to please us, and it may well be that from the author's point of view we seem unreasonable; but although we have not discovered any serious flaw in her construction or in the actual writing, the fact remains that her characters carry little sense of reality. Ireland, in the troublous times of the English Queen Elizabeth, is the scene of the action, but, if we may be permitted so quick a change of meta-

phor in a short notice, the author forgets that it is not of much use merely to manufacture a stained-glass window of a rare and complicated pattern unless a strong light shines behind it. Here the light of inspiration is rather feeble, and the story is ineffective; it fails to hold the reader's attention save in its detached incidents. We are sorry to be unable to commend it, for considerable pains have evidently been taken in its evolution.

*Olive in Italy.* By MORAY DALTON. (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

THERE is something disarming about a first novel: it is "almost certain to be, whatever else it is, full of industry and solemnity and fire"; and our expectations are raised by the fact that it forms part of the First Novel Library, which was to include only the first novels of such new authors who showed exceptional talent. The present work, the sixteenth of this series, has its full share of the expected solemnity and fire; its author has the gift of telling a story with spirit and energy, if somewhat over-emphatically; the close of many a chapter makes an effective "curtain"; while the three "books" into which the story is divided are full of pleasant vignettes of Italy, and the fragrance and art of Siena, Florence, and Rome.

But with all due deduction for the vigour and narrative quality of the story, there is little distinction in the odyssey of the orphan girl, Olive Agar, teacher of English at Siena, governess at Florence, and artist's model at Rome; in her meeting with the player of Chopin, Jean Avenel; in her pursuit by the Prince Tor di Rocca, and the latter's final discomfiture—for he is discomfited, as the motto on the fly-leaf of the book is:

For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full mixed, and He poureth out of the same. As for the dregs thereof: all the ungodly, the earth shall drink them. . . .

The chief defect of the book is the unreality of its characters, none of which attains to real flesh and blood. Each, oddly enough, appears to have his or her original in the sculpture galleries of Europe. The ill-fated Gemma, whose beauty had "the strange boding loveliness of a pale orchid," and whom the "students of the University of Siena named the Odalisque," is compared to the "Capuan Psyche" (and, again, not very felicitously, to "a silent Sappho"!). Jean Avenel, most unconvincing of heroes, has a face like the bust of Julius Caesar in the British Museum, but differs from the less fortunate Roman in possessing "black hair, rather longer than is usual in this country." Prince Tor di Rocca has a "Neronic upper lip." He is also "handsome as a fawn might be, and as a tiger is, not sleek, but lean and brown, with hot insolent eyes and a fine and cruel mouth," and with a great emerald sparkling on the little finger of his left hand—the ideal of a non-moral superman!

The dialogue on occasions falls into the florid and Bulwer Lytton manner, as may be judged by the following excerpt, which is intended to represent the conversation of two mondains in a box at the opera-house at Siena:

"The Capuan Psyche and a rose from the Garden of Eden," said a man in the stage-box, who had discerned Olive's fresh, eager prettiness beyond the pale beauty of the Odalisque.

He handed the glasses to his neighbour: "Choose. The rôle of Paris is a thankless one; it involved death in the end for the shepherd-prince."

"Yes, but you are not a shepherd-prince."

Yes, but such people do not say such things!

*An Adventure in Exile.* By RICHARD DUFFY. (Stanley Paul and Co., 6s.)

"AN Adventure in Exile" is a good title, but it has the advantage of the book, which has little of exile and less of adventure. Indeed exile is a brave word for the short *villegeatura* of the hero, Lloyd Avery, who is haunted by the "hue of the far-off." We expect him to be finely touched to fine issues. He is sick of the marionette-play of society, of the "luncheons and dinners, dances, theatres, suppers, everything that makes up the old grind of life" he had lived for ten years. He thinks of the distant view of his *château d'exil*:

The whole world seemed to lie between him and the tiled roof, symbol of the far-away. The lure was beckoning him, as often before when he had not heeded. In differing guise it beguiled the soldier of fortune, the sailor, the tramp, and wanderers of whatsoever name in all corners of the earth. It called to all men. Many yielded, many more resisted though hearkening fearlessly in the penal round of daily duties.

Well and good; we expect the charm of distant horizons, some active wandering—but the romantic note, once sounded, dies away. Avery goes—to Normandy, to a perfectly habitable château near the not inaccessible Falaise, where he meets with his adventure, the woman he eventually marries, a Madame de Lescure, who allows herself to be addressed by the peasants as Madame la Sainte! Their attraction is told with all the familiar intensity of the *feuilleton*:

She became silent under his searching gaze. The humid red tone of her lips paled, though the radiant eyes of amethyst met his unfalteringly. Understanding, vague, yet penetrant, waved between them. . . . Lids veiled the eyes of amethyst, and at the corners of the mouth lurked shadows of the enigmatic smile.

Each of their meetings had been epochal, and the other days of his life were null. His old self fell from him like a garment, life was born in him again, and she was his life. On the last page:

The eyes of amethyst looked surrender into his and closed as she gave him her lips.

We confess to a certain slight prejudice against a book where sombre is spelt "somber," and the hero has a "well-molded" face. There are, however, some blots which are not confined to the English of America; Lady Grove would notice the use of the word "ride" for the "action of sitting in a cab." The awkwardness of "My comrade acts like he had a woman on his mind," is perhaps to be attributed to the humour of the comic American; but the too picturesque strength of "Mrs. Herbert dropped the maternal pose, and shed on them both, eyes, teeth, lips in smiling languor," is the author's own deliberate work. When too, will the convention disappear, that English like: "At this hour so matinale nobody visits the park" induces the illusion that we are in France?

The matter of the conversation is not much better than the style; here are some brilliants of very inferior taste:

"At twenty-five a man is afraid he will get married, despite his best intentions. At thirty-five he's afraid he won't."

"At thirty-five," said Stéphanie, smiling above very white, small teeth, "a woman no longer fears, she is in despair."

Altogether, the book is a vapid book; there is none of the impact of the writer's personality, none of the "emotion," that constituent which Professor Holmes in his new book postulates as the first of all necessities in picture making, and is no less an essential of novel-making. Each sentence, each phrase might be transferred from the mouth of one character to one

of the others; no one has a peculiar note, an accent of individuality. The shadowy puppets move listlessly through their tedious parts in an artificial and not very perfectly valued scene.

*The Ideas of a Plain Country-woman.* (Constable, 3s.)

It has been said that every American village possesses three poets, two female and one male. Our "Plain Country-woman" is one of these poets of the village. She, it is claimed in the preface, has lived deeply and "touches the vital well-springs of living with a hand that we feel is that of experience." She reflects, with all the inherent drawbacks of the American idiom, the "reveries of thousands of women," while the headings of her chapters—"Philosophies of a House-cleaning Day," "The Simple Life," "Some Needs of Women," "The Truth About Love," and, lastly, "The Reflections of a Grandmother"—indicate clearly the class she intends to reach—and probably reaches.

Her attitude to all these things is almost too healthy; her book is full of the praise of poverty, the austerities of housework, the simple life, and the homeliness of the home on the ragged edge of a little Indiana town with the plain fields and a fringe of flat woodland behind it.

What is the "peculiar charm" of these writings, what wins her the millions of readers—principally women—vouched for by the preface? "People by the millions have read and are to-day each week and each month reading the writings of the 'Plain Country-woman,' irrelevant as it may be in her eyes and their eyes, and they have read with pleasure and profit." And yet she speaks with no authority; she has few settled convictions; nothing but "leanings toward certain doctrines, and among them the idea of reincarnation"; her education stopped short of a common school course. In literature she admires those "rare books," "Cranford," "Rebecca" and "Elizabeth and her German Garden," while she surprises us with putting the question, "Why Mrs. Humphry Ward persists in giving us immoral women as heroines in her books?" whereas Mrs. Humphry Ward's heroines are often noticeable for their excess of conscience! Her philosophy is that of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," also from America; her language somewhat over-emphatic, as when she speaks feelingly of books "bristling with immoralities told in language suggestive enough to rouse the flagging sense of interest in minds steeped and dulled in sensational details of rotten society." It is possible that the author's taste is inherited from her mother, whose "taste in literature was absolutely unerring," and who swept aside, as all bright and good women should, the inconsequential, the deleterious, and the unpleasant in literature, choosing *restful tales of quiet English farm life*, strong stories of travel and adventure, true-hearted stories of the nobler type, and now and then a yarn like "Wild Bill" or the "Heroes of the Plains"!

The author, in very early days, when inwardly rebelling against her copper-toed shoes and waterproof cloak, wished herself like a neighbour's little girl "resplendent in pretty and fashionable garments." She was told, however, by her mother that the rich little girl was common—that she lived in a rented house and her mother used bad grammar. Whatever association a rented house conveys to the American we cannot say; to the English mind there is nothing so very seriously damning in it; while imperfect grammar and misuse of English is not infrequent in the pages of the "Plain Country-woman," who, we are told, "had great pretensions to gentility." "March," she writes, "is a *fortuitous* birth month," though the

context shows that she wishes to say fortunate or favourable. Her metaphors now and then are very masquerades of imagery led by the very lord of misrule:

"Can we not trample upon the shackles we ourselves have forged by simply running to seed on proprieties and social ethics?" she asks? How shall such a writer grow or educate a figurative conscience, that is to say, be more conscientious in the use of figures, and resist the temptation to ignore the implications of metaphor?

Turning from the style to the contents of the book we are dismayed by the succession of platitude and ineptitude, of savourless narrative and scullery philosophy. Let us take a few aphorisms from these chapters (whose purpose, by the way, is to "reassure women a little as to the purpose of their being"):

We are constituted a gregarious race.  
When you are downhearted, a laugh is the only thing that will cure you.

I would write a book about the duties of fatherhood if I thought the men would read it—but they wouldn't.

I have just lost a friend who was an ideal father. Of course he was a gentleman; an ideal father could not be otherwise.

The family usually has its origin in the union of a young couple irresistibly drawn together by the sex attraction.

It is a doctrine of mine that the quality of mind does not change with what we call civilisation, except for the worse.

It is a favourite maxim of mine that the real joys of life are not for the few that belong to the common lot.

The world has run to seed on (*sic*) doing the proper thing. The tameness of it is terrible, and I do not wonder men break away and commit immorality to interrupt the fearful monotony of elegance and correctness in which nice women are contented to live.

I remember days better than years, and some of the days seem the longer—no doubt they are.

I asked a farmer the other day which month in the year was hardest on man and beast, and he replied, "March—March—March by long odds."

Such is the wisdom of the "Plain Country-woman," whose writings are more popular than the writings of any single contributor to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and who claims to have "sensed some of the mysteries of life and death before she was five years old." Was it really necessary, we wonder, to reserve all rights, "including that of translation into foreign languages, including the Scandinavian? Probably not.

#### AN OUTDOOR BREVIARY—IV.

THE most generous of flower-bearing trees is the hawthorn, whose million-eyed flowers lie flatly, like a snow-crust, upon the upper side of the spray, while beneath is an ancient silver-green or bleached trunk and a twisted and intertwined knot of boughs, such as no curious work of old ironsmiths could equal.

Even fuller of flower than the white seems a great red hawthorn in full flower by a waterside, as they are planted by the canal-like ducts and reaches of the Cherwell, where Walter Pater must have seen, every year, from their "bleached and twisted trunks and branches, a plumage of tender crimson fire out of the heart of the wood" burning upon the water, a double light, and dropping their pinkish petals like beads thickly upon its brown-amber surface of smooth water, which is dappled with slanting rays of sunshine and pricked all over with a little dust of flying insects.

In this field there are "borders of gold, with studs of silver." The growing grass is standing thick, and pricked with yellow rattle, dog-daisies and buttercups—the only field where gold and silver is to be had for

the picking. Here in a pool of gold, capriciously bright as the one spot in an old picture that has been restored by the hand of a cleaner, are buttercups. The next field is white with daisies—silver studs. A legend seems written here as on vellum with capitals of burnished gold, with a margin ornamented as in ancient missals, with leaves of emerald-green, with tall flowers of gold and azure, like fitted jewels, with stems of silver, tarnished with the lapse of centuries.

"We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver."

Within this ring of larches and beeches a small open space of grass has the comfortable shelter and most fresh stillness of the deeper woods. The scent of life is never fuller in the woods than it is here, for now the ground, covered with the first green wonder-work of summer, a mat of leaves of the commonest weeds—green shafts, arrow-heads, clusters and sprays—is yielding up its hopes, as in the autumn it exhales its memories. Under the multitude of smooth and rugged columns of the copse, between the serpentine roots of the trees, run pools of steely-blue hyacinths; while, in places, pale anemones are powdered, like spring-fallen snow that fades as soon as it alights. In the open grassy plat, the musk of yellow flowers, moving lightly above the grass on their invisible stalks, rises above the fragrance of the shining turf, where clots of scentless celandines are flashing back the sun's radiance.

Here, too, in this valley of cuckoos, that bird breathes out with sweetest emphasis each of his "soft little globes of bosom-shaped sound," and from the beeches, which have opened their silken fans, the hollow brown bud-sheaths are falling, "touching at last so imperceptibly the earth with which they are to mingle that the gesture is much gentler than a salutation, and even more discreet than a discreet caress."

The deep, uncropped grass grows higher under the grey slant-stemmed trees in the orchard, which are covered with vari-coloured bloom, either white flakes of pear-blossom or a fine red powder of uncrumpling apple-buds. Each tree was as if it had been wholly plunged in the very fountain of youth to emerge shining with the dews and fires of that bright water. Its dews had been sprinkled, too, on the grass, which had the bloom of emerald upon it, and upon the small mauve cuckoo-flowers that trembled lightly on their fine stalks; while upon every leaf there was that delicate birth-dew which is upon all things in the first hours of life. A blackbird, with something delicate and sliding in his motion, as if he were gliding along some invisible thread, flew up and away from a swaying bough. And above the bough I looked, and, behold, in the firmament there appeared as it were a sapphire stone, and on it the clouds-caught between the branches, as it were a lock of sheep's wool upon a briar—melted as silver is melted out of the midst of the furnace.

"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant?" The perfume of the little lime-flowers falls through the air like water-drops, the perfume of the cool-rooted field flowers rises like the spray of a fountain from stream and hedge and meadow.

The long, ripe-seeded grass of the water-meadow, flowing towards the hedge, has risen like a surfless wave and broken over it, high and rank, and rushing into the very bushes. There is a trodden track to the river on one side of the hedge, a shining crease among

the russet sorrel-tops and grass-heads, and from every other head among them start the unsown flowers of the air, colourless moths, with their weak, drugged flight, whose wings beat so fast that they wrap them round with a whitish blurr. The hedge—it is Baptist night—is a very *via lactea*, with its numerous flat-faced wafers of elder-flowers, and its inlay of dog-roses, open and shell-white, or closed and red in narrow bud, and its *torchères* of meadowsweet. In the "Flora Domestica" the White Iris is spoken of as known to the French as *la flambe blanche*, but "the white torch or flame" in a cresset seems to catch and cast into the mould of speech the spirit of the meadowsweet.

"Solitude needs no park"; a thicket may be as secret as a forest.

In the densely wooded ghyll the air is heavy with a riot of vegetation and motionless as a canal. The lower scrub is of ash-saplings, matted with bramble, briar and honeysuckle; above lean the greater trunks of trees, closing over the water's channel with the thickness of their growth. In the half-light, the elder lays out her flat-faced flowers; the little hollow is over-arched entirely by boughs, and in its green light the stream, its secret, trickles on its way between high banks of rich red earth, feathery with hart's-tongue ferns. The whole place has the air of some quiet precinct in the sea, secret and untroubled, and is immortally green and peaceful beneath its reticulated shades. Above a little round pool only, there is a gap in the roof. There was nothing to show that this was water but an almost imperceptible internal welling, and now and then a faint lap and dying bubble round its rim; but suddenly there comes a waft of light moving swifter than a weaver's shuttle across it, and the netted shadows shake and blot of darkness within it seem to swell and dwindle, as with respiration.

"My root was spread out by the waters and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

"Go into a field of flowers where no house is builded and eat only of the flowers of the field."

The elders are covered with white wafers of blossom. The grass is thick and heavy-headed in the field, and showing over the green-bronze of just-ripe herbage the fine broken colour made by the dust-browns and blue-greys of the seed-heads powdering the grass; there is lilac-bloom of pollen upon it, as if the shadow of a cloud had patched it; and here and there the tinge of sorrel-flower. The long slope is bright with ragged robin and tall sorrel, and rolls in waves, breaking into foam where the daisies and hemlocks line the hedge.

"I sat among the flowers and did eat of the herb of the field, and the meat of the same satisfied me."

## MEETINGS OF SOCIETIES ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

APRIL 6TH, 1909.

FREDERICK GILLETT, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Secretary exhibited, on behalf of Mr. George Jennison, some fertilised eggs from a pair of Seba pythons in the Belle Vue Zoological Gardens, Manchester.

Dr. R. T. Leiper, F.Z.S., exhibited a greatly distorted elephant's tusk from the Congo, and a malformed canine tooth of a hippopotamus from Uganda, the conditions most probably originating from mechanical injury.

Mr. E. T. Newton, F.R.S., F.Z.S., exhibited a metatarsal bone of an ox, showing in a remarkable manner the marks of gnawing by rodents, possibly squirrels, rats, or mice, which he had found in the woods near Cromer.

Mr. R. I. Pocock, F.L.S., F.Z.S., communicated a paper entitled "Description of a new Form of Ratel (*Mellivora*) from Sierra Leone, with Notes upon the described African Forms of this Genus."

Miss Muriel Robertson read a paper, communicated by Prof. E. A. Minchin, M.A., V.P.Z.S., "On an Ichthyosporidian causing a Fatal Disease in Sea-Trout."

Mr. C. Tate Regan, M.A., F.Z.S., read a paper on a small series of fishes from Christmas Island, collected by Dr. C. W. Andrews, F.R.S., F.Z.S. Seven new species were described, comprising five Blennies, a *Pampeneus*, and a *Cirrhites*. In connection with the last-named it was pointed out that the Cirrhitidae, as defined and limited by Dr. Günther, with the addition of *Haplodactylus*, form a very natural family.

Mr. Hamilton H. Druce, F.L.S., F.Z.S., read a short paper "On some New and Little-known *Hesperiidae* from Tropical West Africa," which contained remarks on, and descriptions of, some new forms of these butterflies lately obtained by Mr. G. L. Bates, F.Z.S., on the Ja River, Cameroons, and others from Nigeria. New species of the genera *Abantis*, *Acleros*, *Gorgyra*, *Parnara*, and *Ceratrichia* were described.

The next meeting of the Society for scientific business will be held on Tuesday, the 27th April, 1909, at half-past eight o'clock p.m., when the following communications will be made:

1. Dr. T. A. Chapman, F.Z.S.—A Review of the Species of the Lepidopteran Genus *Lycænopsis* Feld. (*Cyaniris* auct. nec Dalm.) on examination of the Male Ancillary Appendages.

2. F. E. Beddard, M.A., F.R.S., F.Z.S.—On some Points in the Structure of *Galidia elegans*, and on the Postcaval Vein in Carnivora.

3. Dr. R. W. Shufeldt, C.M.Z.S.—On the Comparative Osteology of the Passerine Bird *Arachnothera magna*.

Communications intended for the Scientific Meetings of the Zoological Society of London should be addressed to—

P. CHALMERS MITCHELL (Secretary).  
3 Hanover Square, London, W., April 13th, 1909.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### "DREADNOUGHTS."

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I give below some extracts from a publication known as "Manor's Message," seven thousand copies of which are distributed monthly to the residents of a South London borough, and which is issued by the Bermondsey Mission of the United Methodist Free Church, under the editorship of the missioner, Mr. W. Kaye Dunn, B.A.:—

MAD! MAD!! MAD!!!

Eight Dreadnoughts at the hands of the Liberal Government!!! The Christian members of the Liberal Government have one and all backslidden. . . . There are 199 Free Churchmen M.P.'s. . . . The Liberal Caucus, it seems, is for Jingism.

But they [the Free Churchmen] must stand by their own Government. Why? Is the independent M.P. so defunct? . . .

There is one humble group upon which will be centred the eyes of many Free Churchmen—the Labour Bench, a very Christian Bench indeed. Philip Snowden said at Swansea that he had worked and prayed for years for a

union between Free Churchmen and his bench. Thank God his bench stands up bravely to give the blunt Parliamentary lie to this ugly Dreadnought Liberalism. If the Labour Party best interpret my Christian ideal, and at the next election there come for my vote an official Liberal and a Labour man, the Labour man gets that vote though the Tory get in. I would have rejoiced to vote "Labour" at Croydon. The Liberal, who has forgotten to be liberal, will sink and drown, the Labour man will rise to swim another day. I do not give myself to the Labour Party—but they may get my next vote as being the nearest interpretative men of the old message, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men."

The article is signed "W. Kaye Dunn." Immediately after appears the following:—

### CHURCH BLASPHEMY.

This Sunday evening a Church Lads' Brigade has straggled past my window to the "tune" of fifes and drums.

What a blasphemy that the "Church" of Jesus should dress lads up in soldiers' mock uniform, and that, too, on God's Sabbath, on the Day of Peace. That on the day that is peculiarly the day Jesus has made His own, His "Church" should seek by such a pernicious advertisement to put the military devil into the hearts of the growing lads of our district.

If Christ walked our streets and met that ugly imitation of Satan, what would He say?

The Church that belongs to the Military Spirit first and to Jesus secondly, is no church of His and may be written off the list.

W. K. D.

Some time ago a local clergyman of the Church of England was held up to opprobrium for daring, if I remember aright, to be associated with a local publican or two on the borough council, or some such institution, in defiance of the views of the Editor of "Manor's Message."

H. W. L.

London, S.E., April 8, 1909.

### WILKIE COLLINS AND WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I picked up, the other day, at a second-hand bookshop a copy of one of those annual miscellanies by the sale of which it is hoped to benefit the funds of certain bloated "charities." One of the pictures struck me as being worth the money. But I was soon to discover that I had cheaply purchased treasures of literature also. Among the articles was one by Mr. William Le Queux, entitled "Where I Find My Plots." Feeling profoundly uninterested in the genesis of what Mr. Le Queux is pleased to call his "plots"—ah! those arid and uncultivated plots!—I was about to pass from the essay when my attention was arrested by an allusion to Wilkie Collins. My curiosity was naturally aroused. For what could the ingenious author of "Armadale" be doing in that galley? And this is what I read: "With the death of my old friend, Wilkie Collins, the mystery story went out."

Now, Wilkie Collins is less known, personally and in his habit as he lived, than any other writer of equal eminence who wrote in the Victorian era. Students of literature should be legitimately desirous to obtain some reliable information about the social side of his existence. The reputation of Collins justifies—one had almost said, demands—a biography. And behold, here is the very man fully equipped for the enterprise. We should certainly hear more of the "old friend" ship of these two writers. Will Mr. Le Queux "oblige?"—as they used to say at the music-halls. One would like to know, for example, when and under what circumstances the two "old friends" met? Who introduced them? What were the respective ages of the men when they first foregathered? How long did the old friendship last? At which of the meetings of the writers did Wilkie Collins describe his novels as "mystery stories"? And how came it to pass that during the whole course of this old friendship Mr. Le Queux failed to acquire from the Master a little of that Master's skill in the art of construction, his nice discrimination in the portrayal of human character as evinced in a Captain Wragge or a Count Fosco, his mastery of a simple, lucid, grammatical English style? These are points on which one feels that Mr. Le Queux—an he would—might discourse profitably in his own brand of English. I hope that this respectful reminder

may induce him to give to the literary world all he knows about his "old friend Wilkie Collins." He may take it from me that readers would find reliable reminiscence of Collins infinitely more to their taste than the frowsy story of the finding of his own "plots."

N. N.

#### A FITTING REMEDY FOR "SUFFRAGETTE" MANIA.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—A letter appeared under this title in your issue of April 10th which it is difficult to let pass unnoticed.

Your correspondent probably forgets that in opening their campaign the Suffragettes omitted to ask the opinion of Mr. Ridley as to how it should be conducted. Mr. Ridley evidently loses sight of the fact that the Suffragettes are convinced that theirs is a just cause.

If he could for a moment imagine himself in their position he might be able to enlighten us as to the manner in which he would carry on such a campaign. He would find that quiet work had been tried for nearly half a century without much obvious result; he would find that large meetings had been held, petitions drawn up and presented, books and pamphlets written, with scarcely a sign of encouragement from the general public.

But he would find that the tactics of the Suffragettes had, if nothing else, roused the popular attention—which was their aim.

Perhaps it still lies with the quiet thinkers and workers to convert the Mr. Ridleys of this world. The constant dripping of water on a stone will, at last, wear a channel.

The Suffragettes will be relieved to hear—through Mr. Ridley—that John Bull has had "his 'fill' of diversion and 'tarantism.' And now it is high time he assayed a little reflection and resumed business!"

It has been suggested—even in Parliament—that a party of women who could raise such gigantic subscriptions, and who could use their influence so untiringly at the bye-elections, should at least have their requests investigated. Perhaps the fact that many of the Suffragettes repeatedly get themselves imprisoned would help to persuade Mr. Ridley that their "tarantism" is, at least, in earnest. "Demented" and "neurotic" as he states them to be, yet they willingly suffer discomfort, obloquy, and even his storms of vituperation when they think it will help their cause.

So it remains for the "cold douche" of commonsense and the "diet" of common justice to cure these Suffragettes of their "mania."

J. RYLE.

Brighton.

#### THOS. HARDY AND GERARD DE NERVAL.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—Mr. Thomas Hardy's recollections of the Argyle Rooms, in his poem in the *English Review*, quoted in the last ACADEMY, says a correspondent, are singularly inexact as well as uncharitable. The epithet "boisterous" applied to the dancing is particularly absurd. There was nothing boisterous about the proceedings at the Argyle, which were as decorous as a funeral. In point of fact, nobody danced at the Argyle with the exception of the paid professional dancers, whose evolutions were kept within bounds by the strict supervision of the proprietor. The place was as well ordered as regards externals as the Court of Louis XIV. of France. It is interesting to compare Mr. Hardy's speculation as to the ultimate fate of his partners at the Argyle:—

"Do their spectres spin like sparks within  
The smoky halls of the Prince of Sin  
To a thunderous Jullien air?"

with the pathetic reference to his youthful loves by the Frenchman, Gerard de Nerval, in *Les Cydalises*:—

"Où sont nos amoureuses?  
Elles sont au tombeau!  
Elles sont plus heureuses  
Dans un séjour plus beau.

"Elles sont près des anges  
Dans le fond du ciel bleu,  
Et chantent les lozanges  
De la Mère de Dieu."

J. H.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

##### BIOGRAPHY

*The Archbishops of St. Andrews.* John Herkless and Robert Kerr Hannay. Blackwood, 7s. 6d. net.

##### MISCELLANEOUS

*A Vagabond's Idea.* Geoffrey W. A. Norton. Era Publishing Co., 6d.

*The Mystery of Pain.* James Hinton. Allen & Unwin, 1s. net.

*The Art of Hunting.* William Twiss. Simpkin Marshall, 15s. net. An edition de luxe, 30s. net.

*Auction Bridge.* Captain Browning. Routledge, 1s.

*The Book of Trade Secrets.* An Expert. Haslam, 1s. net.

*Questions at Issue in Our English Speech.* E. W. Bowen, Ph.D. Broadway Pub. Co., \$1.00.

##### MAGAZINES

*Mind; Old Lore Miscellany; Orkney and Shetland Records; Caithness and Sutherland Records; Science Progress.*

##### FICTION

*Priscilla and Charybdis.* Frankfort Moore. Constable, 6s.

*The Story of Thyrza.* Alice Brown. Constable, 6s.

*Stories from the Greek Legends.* C. Casquino Hartley. Laurie, 3s. 6d. net.

*Mortimer's Marriage.* Horace Wyndham. John Milne, 6s.

*The Green Curve and Other Stories.* Ole Luk-Oil. Blackwood, 6s.

##### POETRY

*Narkissos.* W. Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d. net.

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